

AAG Newsletter
of the
Association of American
Geographers

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All Newsletter materials must arrive at the Association office by the 1st of the month preceding the month of the publication. This includes job listings. Material will be published on a space available basis and at the discretion of the editorial staff.

When your address changes, please notify the Association office immediately. Six weeks notice is necessary to insure uninterrupted delivery of AAG publications. To assist the AAG office in your address change, include the address label with your change of address.

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AAG Journals Go Online with Synergy

I am pleased to announce that the AAG has concluded an agreement with Blackwell Publishers to publish the AAG journals online through Blackwell's *Synergy* electronic publishing platform. Let me hasten to add that the hard copy publication of our journals will continue in its present form, and that the online publication will be an added benefit to all AAG members, not a replacement of the hardcopy journals.

As a scholarly journal publisher, the AAG must meet the ongoing needs of our members and authors, while at the same time staying on top of the changing realities of the library marketplace. It is equally clear that enhanced access and readership is essential to any scholarly or research journal's continued success in the future.

Over the past several years, I and the AAG Council have spent countless hours carefully analyzing the changing landscape of scholarly publishing, the new realities of the library marketplace, and our rapidly evolving electronic publishing options. Thus, the decision to place our journals online with the *Synergy* system represents the culmination of a long process of detailed analysis, and the exploration of several vendor options by the AAG. We feel that the *Synergy* system addresses the demands of major libraries while at the same time meeting the changing needs of a new generation of geographic researchers and scholars. *Synergy* will also help enable us to cope with a projected national decline in print subscriptions to libraries while extending readership and access as widely as possible. Making the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer* available online through Blackwell's *Synergy* electronic publishing system should in fact allow us to

sell our journals to many more institutions than currently subscribe to them.

What Benefits will AAG Members Receive from *Synergy*?

While *Synergy* addresses a changing library marketplace, the system's most impressive benefits for most AAG members will be the easy-to-use and robust functionality it provides as an online gateway to journal content. *Synergy* will provide AAG members with a seamless link from a password-protected area of our website to full-text HTML and PDF versions of complete AAG journal articles with abstract, key-



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word, author, and reference links to and from a wide range of databases (CrossRef, ISI Web of Science, JSTOR), as well as abstract-level access to all journals published by Blackwell and hundreds of other publishers worldwide. Search criteria can be saved and then run again at a later date, keeping AAG members up-to-date with the latest papers published in their area of interest. We can customize the system so that AAG members can also receive additional members-only benefits. In collaboration with Blackwell, we have the potential to set up a number of special features for AAG members, ranging from the simple (personalized home pages for favorite content, automated emails of Tables of Contents) to the complex (additional content, e.g., additional color maps and charts, datasets, etc.). Our agreement with Blackwell *Synergy* will also allow us to have AAG branding down to the article level, including links to the AAG's conference registration or membership renewal pages. We also have created functionality to allow reciprocal access to related journals if we decide to do so. In the future, we can also consider

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effective January 1, 2006, for a four-year term. Kwan is a geography professor at Ohio State University. She earned her PhD at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1994. Kwan's research focuses on GIS, GIS-based geocomputation and 3D geovisualization; critical GIS; quantitative



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methods; gender/ethnic issues in urban/transportation geography; information and communications technologies (ICT); feminist methodologies; and geographies of gender, race, and religion. She is

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implementing a range of premium features, including early online access to journal content for AAG members or a host of other services.

By publishing through *Synergy*, the AAG will also be providing our authors the benefit of a worldwide electronic platform, which will greatly expand readership and access to our journals. Through the extensive linking allowed by *Synergy*, geographers and readers from many other disciplines around the world will be able to link easily to AAG abstracts, and will be encouraged to join the AAG. *Synergy* will help to increase the AAG journals' profiles as the most widely linked, searched, and read geography journals worldwide. This should further advance the AAG's standing as one of the world's leading geography associations, by fostering wider readership and increased citations of AAG journal articles.

Other Benefits to the AAG of our Agreement with *Synergy*

- *Free Digitization of Back Issues*: As an important part of the agreement which the AAG negotiated with Blackwell, all back issues of *The Professional Geographer* (PG) dating back to its founding in 1949, and all back issues of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* dating back to 1955, will be digitized by Blackwell at no cost to the AAG. This is a major benefit that will

currently serving as Associate Editor for *Geographical Analysis* and as an editorial board member for *Gender, Place and Culture* and *The Canadian Geographer*. Kwan has edited special issues of *Environment and Planning A*, *Cartographica*, *Transportation Research A* (in progress), *Urban Geography* (in progress), and

the *Journal of Geographical Systems*.

Thomas Hodler began his role as the *Cartography* Editor for both the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer* on May 1, 2005.

Hodler is a professor at the University of Georgia, where he also served as Associate Dean of the Graduate School from 1999 to 2003. He earned his PhD at Oregon State University in 1977 and currently serves as Cartographic Editor for *Cartography and Geographic Information Science*. He was previously Cartographic Editor for *Urban Geography* and *Southeastern Geographer*.

Information on the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer* is available at the AAG website (www.aag.org) under "Publications." ■

greatly enhance access to our journals, and a major cost savings to the AAG.

- *Security of Data*: Like all publishers, we are concerned about the safety and security of our journal content. Having the best security measures possible is in our best interest. We have discussed this issue with Blackwell, which has implemented several important controls in areas of concern to us in this area.

- *Change of Publishers*: Equally important, if the AAG should ever decide—for whatever reason—that *Synergy* is not serving our needs, the AAG also has the unilateral option to remove our journals from the system at the end of any volume year.

- *AAG Ownership of All Content*: As always, the AAG owns all content, including the intellectual material and the physical files. If the AAG should decide to move to another publisher, all of the electronic files would be transferred to that publisher.

How to Access Your AAG Journals Online

AAG members can easily access AAG journals on the *Synergy* system by logging onto the AAG website, and clicking on "Access the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer* Online." As an AAG member, you will be able to access, search, and download your journal articles from anywhere in the world, and from any

computer with Internet connection. No additional login or password is required to access the *Synergy* system. *Synergy* is intuitive for researchers, has easy-to-administer interfaces, and provides AAG members with instant access to both current and archival issues of the *Annals* and the PG.

Building a Collaborative Relationship between the AAG and Blackwell

I'd like to acknowledge the patience and the constructive, accommodating approach of Terri Teleen, the AAG's editorial contact at Blackwell, and Gordon Tibbits, President of Blackwell Publishing (U.S.) operations, during the lengthy negotiation process that characterized the AAG's cautious decision to go online with *Synergy*, as well as for input by them to this summary of the AAG/Blackwell *Synergy* system features. In representing the AAG in our protracted discussions, I asked for and received many special features and conditions in our agreement with Blackwell regarding online publication, and I greatly appreciate Blackwell's willingness to consider our special needs and requests, and their flexibility in working with us to achieve our goals. ■

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